



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science FY 2019 Budget Hearing for Department of Justice Attorney General Jeff Sessions 10:30 AM Thursday April 26, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the time and for your strong leadership of the Committee, along with your very able Ranking Member, Mr. Serrano, of New York.

I also want to welcome Attorney General Sessions to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on a wide range of issues.

As I say at every meeting, the “power of the purse” lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

And Mrs. Lowey and I are looking forward to rapidly concluding work on the Fiscal Year '19 bills with the same oversight and forethought.

Mr. Attorney General, I am pleased you are sitting here today as the 84th Attorney General of the United States - representing the people of the United States. It is your responsibility as our nation's chief law enforcement officer, to enforce the laws and defend the interests of the United States, against all threats foreign and domestic, ensuring a fair and impartial administration of justice for *all Americans*.

I am especially proud of the work of your Department's law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the U.S. Marshals Service.

It is abundantly clear, our nation needs you and the men and women of the Department of Justice to protect our nation as we face mounting and complex challenges like:

- a growing and deadly opioid and drug epidemic;
- the ever-present cyber related attacks on our nation's private and public IT infrastructure;
- the scourge of 21st century human trafficking;

- the heightened threats posed by foreign and domestic terrorists.

I would like to focus on and applaud your dedication to attacking the opioid epidemic. In the FY 2018 spending bill, this Committee made a substantial investment – the largest to date - providing your Department, along with many other Agencies across the federal government with increased funding to respond to this killer epidemic.

Further, as we are fighting the deadliest drug epidemic in history, I share your concerns that our nation will face additional consequences with the growing availability of marijuana.

As we march down the ill-advised road of legalization- in direct contradiction of current federal law - I fear we do not fully understand the consequences and impact these actions may have on our children and generations to follow.

Once again, today's hearing is part of a process that we follow to determine the best use of taxpayer dollars on behalf of the people we represent at home.

Mr. Attorney General, I look forward to your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the time.

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